

# Make Use of In-House Resources...

**E**ducation and the sharing of ideas are two key elements to any successful trade show. This is no different with the upcoming ALA-MWR Expo to be held in San Antonio in late August.

The ultimate goal for Morale, Welfare, and Recreation professionals heading to Texas from around the world will be to see what new trends may help them better serve their patrons back home, and meet with colleagues to discuss ideas that may help overcome challenges at their fitness center, pool, bowling center or outdoor/indoor recreation center.

Unlike other trade shows, the MWR Expo provides only a handful of seminars and allows each service to develop its own schedule of educational seminars. While this is a good idea and gives each service branch the chance to target areas each feels needs to be strengthened, American Logistics Association officials should consider offering more in terms of seminars that would be attractive to members of all branches.

While other trade organizations that focus on only one topic like fitness or aquatics may find it easier to establish a schedule, we encourage those with the ALA to work more closely with MWR leaders and facility managers to develop education opportunities that directly apply to what is happening in the fitness and recreation marketplace.

The advantage the ALA has over other trade organizations is that the armed services have a wealth of MWR professionals who are well versed in not only how to run a particular program, but how to work in the military world as well.

Take, for example, a feature story in this issue of *Government Recreation and Fitness* (see p. 20). MWR leaders at Picatinny Arsenal in New Jersey, realizing there was a lack of aquatic recreation opportunities for the soldiers and their family members on base, went about looking for ways to meet this need. Simultaneously, the local Township of Rockaway was also searching for ways to meet its lack of recreational aquatics programs.

Noting this, officials from both the military base and the local municipality put their collective heads together and found a viable solution: they would share the cost of designing and constructing a new water park. Since the park's opening this past Memorial Day weekend, Picatinny officials have been contacted by a handful of other military bases for information and tours of the new facility.

ALA should consider inviting officials like those from Picatinny to future Expos to discuss the logistical issues of how a project like this was completed. While an aquatic designer can tell you how to lay out a water park, most, if not all, are unfamiliar with how to secure project approval and funding within the military parameters.

As we all know, there are many variables that play into first getting approval and then completing a project as large as construction of a new water park. Who better to explain how do consummate such a project than the people who have done so?

Although this is only one small example, the MWR world is filled with people who are experts in fitness trends, programming, customer service and issues such as procuring funding.

We suggest that ALA officials take advantage of the knowledge these individuals have, and allow them to share it with their brethren. The results could be an increased number of attendees, more trade show floor traffic, and more exhibitors at future ALA-MWR Expos.

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